

Appendix A: Sampling Methodology for Development and Delivery Courses

Development Courses

As part of an administrative query to university administrators, campuses provided a list of three of the most recently developed distance education courses (new courses or existing courses converted to a distance education method of delivery) and three of the most recently developed on-campus courses for each discipline. Campuses were asked to list courses created since January 2004. Campuses identified 1,979 new courses (802 distance education courses and 1,177 on-campus courses).

The Program Evaluation Division selected the courses identified as developed for the 2008-09 or 2009-10 academic years in order to determine the most recent costs for course development (n=801). The Program Evaluation Division stratified the sample by funding category (four categories associated with enrollment growth) and type (distance education and on-campus) and randomly selected 12 courses for each category and type (n=96). To ensure each campus provided information on at least one on-campus course and one distance education course, six additional courses were randomly selected from the following universities:

- Fayetteville State University (one on-campus course and one distance education course)
- North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University (one on-campus course)
- North Carolina Central University (one distance education course)
- University of North Carolina (UNC) at Asheville (one distance education course)
- Winston-Salem State University (one on-campus course)

The final sample consisted of 102 courses (51 distance education courses and 51 on-campus courses).

Delivery Courses

The Program Evaluation Division obtained the Course Description Table File for academic year 2007-08 from UNC General Administration (N=92,111 course sections). Per the Program Evaluation Division's request, the file excluded courses delivered at the North Carolina School of Arts and the North Carolina School of Science and Math. UNC General Administration included information on student credit hours and headcount to determine whether courses were on-campus or off-campus. Courses were considered on-campus courses if 100% of student credit hours were generated by on-campus students; similarly, courses were considered distance education courses if 100% of student credit hours were generated by off-campus students. The course file contained 82,714 on-campus course sections (30,162 unique courses) and 8,342 distance education course sections (4,272 unique courses). Course sections with mixed enrollment of on- and off-campus students were excluded from the sampling frame.

The Program Evaluation Division expected delivery costs to differ by campus because of variation in average faculty salaries. Therefore, a unique identifier for all courses that combined institution code, course number, and discipline was used to match each distance education course to its on-campus course equivalent (n=2,603 matched courses). The Program Evaluation Division stratified the sample of course pairs by institution and funding category and randomly selected 6 to 14 course pairs for each institution (based on the proportion of matched courses by funding category). Once course pairs were identified, the Program Evaluation Division selected specific course sections to collect delivery costs. As much as possible, course sections with the highest enrollment were selected. The final sample consisted of 146 course pairs (146 distance education course sections and 146 on-campus course sections).

The Program Evaluation Division worked with each campus to ensure that the identified courses were appropriate for these analyses and substituted courses as needed.